



Hong Kong Mediation Council

香 港 調 解 會

(隸 屬 香 港 國 際 仲 裁 中 心)

**Topic: Introduction to
Therapeutic Family Mediation
and How to Integrate Different
Therapeutic Approaches in
Family Mediation Practice**

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Therapeutic Family Mediation (TFM)

- **Partially** resolve of **hurts and hatred** aroused from families past history
- **De-escalation** of fierce argument
- Breaking of Communication **Vicious Cycles**
- Motivate Sharing of **Vulnerability** instead of **Allegation**
- Sharing of **expectation and wishes**
- **Uncoupling**

=> **“Constructive use of Conflict”**

Therapeutic Family Mediation Approach (Irving & Benjamin, 2002)

- ➡ Resolve both **relationship** (Relational Goal) and **substantive issues** (Mediation Goal)
- ➡ Reduce intense conflict -> avoid **impasse** (Blockage in Mediation).
- ➡ Reconnection to a communicable level.
- ➡ **Relationship Recovery to Cooperative Level** / Enhance future compliance (Co-parenting)
- ➡ Enhance mutual understanding and **higher commitment** to comply with the term of settlement.
- ➡ **Healing** of Traumatic Experience / **Rebuilding Trust**.
- ➡ **Family Structure Reconstruction** (Weakened or Enmeshed Family **Subsystems**)

Stages of the Process

- **Assessment:** Evaluates **readiness** for mediation and cooperation.
(Assessment: 3-5 sessions)
- **Exploration:** Identifies core issues and potential **co-parenting** options.
(Pre-mediation: 4-5 sessions)
- **Negotiation:** Builds a customized, step-by-step **family or parenting plan**.
(Negotiation: 3-5 sessions)
- **Implementation:** Provides **ongoing support** and troubleshooting as changes occur.
(Follow-up: 1-3 sessions)

Focuses of TFM

- **Emotional relief:** Helps participants manage high stress and strong feelings safely.
- **Practical agreements:** Focuses on actionable plans like co-parenting, child custody, and schedules.
- **Child-centered approach:** Prioritizes the best interests and developmental needs of children.

Ultimate goal of TFM

- **To improve communication between the parties and to potentially create a more amicable and less hostile relationship.**
- **To restore relationships in Family.**

Emotionally-focus Family Mediation (Man's Practical Experiences)

- **1 session for MP and FP respectively.**
- **for Child-inclusive Cases, 1 more session for each children**
- **1 session for consideration in divorce (TFM)**
- **1 session for drawing common concern and expectation, setting mediation agenda.**
- **1 session for children issues**
- **1 session for financial issues**
- **1-2 sessions for draft and signing agreement**

Emotionally Focused Therapy (Leslie Greenburg & Susan Johnson)

- ➡ How to “**read**” emotion.
- ➡ Core elements of EFT.
- ➡ **Adaptive Emotion** vs **Maladaptive Emotion** in Divorce Uncoupling
- ➡ Identify Communication/Emotional **Viscious Cycle** between spouses
- ➡ Emotional **Enactment**
- ➡ Arouse **Empathic Attunement**
- ➡ Arrive Genuine **Resolution in Relationship**

Emotions: fundamentally adaptive

- Emotions tell us what is **personally important** and whether things are going our way (information).
- Emotions help us to **survive (protection)** by providing an efficient, automatic way of responding rapidly to important situations.
- Emotions prepare us for **action**.
- Emotions involve **wishes/needs**, which generate action.
- Emotions integrate experience; give us **meaning, value and direction**.
- Basic concepts: Emotion Schemes; Emotion Assessment; Emotion Change Principles.

Emotional Functioning

Emotion	Adaptive	Maladaptive
Sadness	grieving	hopeless despair, reaching out, desperate clinging
Anger	empowering	destructive
Love	caring/freeing	addictive/clinging
Anxiety	signals danger	traumatic
Shame	belong to	self hate/contempt group/remorse
Disgust/Contempt	healthy outrage	self/other abuse



Be a Firefighter.....

In the fire house, everything you see here, stay here.....
to help people open up and express their feeling when they feel safe
enough to see their **vulnerability**.....**emotion** is just a **signal** inside
your body we can pay **attention to**and a **doorway** to lead
people to help them most..... (George Faller, 2019)



Disclaimer

- Client's background or the case background were altered or undisclosed for **clients' privacy protection**.
- No photo taking or any format of **recording** for the case content.
- The case sharing is only for skill demonstration or academic discussion purpose. Please **do not mention** any content or detail of the case in any other circumstance.
- 如有雷同、實屬巧合

Case Progress

Date	Session	Intervention
10.8.2020	Case Intake Session	Offer preliminary assistance and resources suggestion.
5.9.2020	FP Individual Session	Mediation Assessment for Female Party.
14.9.2020	MP Individual Session	Mediation Assessment for Male Party.
16.9.2020	Child Session I	Child Assessment.
18.9.2020	1st Joint Session	Common Concern, Discussion on the Issue and Report Back Session. Intervention on Parent's Trustful Relationship.
19.9.2020	Caucusing MP	Suggestion raised by MP for problem solving.
20.9.2020	Caucusing FP	FP agreed and raised tiny adjustment.
28.9.2020	Agreement Signed	Agreement Signed and Rebuilding of Communication Channel
11.10.2020	Child Session II	Child Intervention
11.11.2020	Child Session III	Child Intervention and Case Referral

Mediation Assessment Session

A. Tangible Needs Assessment

B. Emotional Needs Assessment (Relationship Building)

1. Family Members Relationships Exploration - 3 generations
2. Reason of their Divorce
3. Emotion-focused: Validation and Empathic Response

明白你會有呢種想法，畢竟你已經幾年無同阿仔/女接觸啦.....一定好掛住啦
(*Empathic Reflection*)當中感受係...?如果能夠既，我都好想鼓勵對方明白你內心既困難.....

4. Core Pain Identification: Attachment Hurts and Traumatic Experience

你所講既係咪即係好害怕面對當日「離異」時候「受到傷害」既感受，可以讓我明白一下..... (*Emotion-focused – emotion scheme*)

5. Preparation for Joint Session: Front Loading/ Tone Setting (Safety Environment)

我哋共同會面嘅時候，我更加會誠邀你哋趁機會聆聽對方，最重要係聆聽對方嘅心聲.....你可以表達自己內心嘅困難同埋脆弱(*Vulnerability*).....但係唔可以互相指責，指責會令我地既耳仔關上.....

Child Assessment

Goal: Explore children's "tangible needs" and "emotional needs" .

- Relationship with parents and other family members
- Assessment for **Developmental Loading**
- Experience in parent's Divorce including:
 1. Any remarkable incidence
 2. Emotion underneath and **explore supportive networks**
 3. Children's perceptions toward parents' marriage
 - Children's own planning to their future and their ambitions.
 - How to **protect themselves** in long run:
 4. Avoid involvements in parents' conflict and **concentrate to their own development.**
 5. How to care for their own emotion.

Need Identification and Case Formulation

Tangible Needs: - Daughter's Visitation, Daughter's Tuition Fee (Legal Concern)
- Daughter's relationship with Father, Daughter's growth and her future (Family

Concern)

Emotional Needs: - Daughter refused to re-experience trauma from family interpretation
- Mother's trauma in divorce and prevent emotional transmission to daughter
- Father's differentiation and growth in marriage – uncoupling

Mediation Assessment: - dispute and client's perspective behind
- Mother and Father's emotion ventilation and mediator's relationship building
- Core pain identification and empathic reflection.

Child Assessment and Child Intervention: Multi-dimensional assessment and daughter's emotion regulation.

Legal Advice: Sufficient legal advice to protect Mediator's Neutral Stance.

Joint Session: - Common Concern and Issues to be discussed
- Shifting from Legal Concern to Family Concern
- Child Assessment Report Back
- Readiness for Conflict Resolution and Emotion Regulation

Joint Session

A. Briefing and Common Concern

B. Emotional Enactment

1. Emotion-focused: Process Secondary Emotion to Primary Hurt and Trauma

記唔記得我哋應承過大家，喺調解房係唔可以互相指責，我哋只能夠表達自己內心嘅感受、能夠做得到嘅話，我哋更加係要用心聆聽...(Safety).

.....當其時既情緒、感受？

2. Share Vulnerability

對於一段咁長時間嘅感情，大家唔能夠善待對方，你感到好傷感係嗎

(Empathic Conjecture)爸爸，我希望你唔會感到壓力我嘗試幫媽媽將佢當刻嘅感受表達出嚟，爸爸你可以一起細心聆聽嗎？

3. Preparation for a Mutual Understanding

對於對方現在的情緒、當其時所面對既困難，你能夠明白嗎(Enactment) ？

C. Tangible Issues Discussion

Mediation Result

- Father **apologized** and both parents could try **to listen and understand** each other.
- Father was willing to give daughter \$2,000.00 per month for her expenses. He wish to give her directly but turns to **bank-in**.
- Father was willing to bear half of the tuition fee of daughter's **studying or other further studying** in the future.
- Mother was referred to join program for Trauma Healing.
- Parents rebuilt **communication channel** via email and agreed to notify issues about custody.
- Daughter was referred to attend therapy sessions. She agreed that she will see father until she's ready and father accepted **to wait**.



Metaphor for an Unhealed Trauma

If trauma was wrapped by bandage together with dirt, bacteria and(weapon) without careful handling, the pain and hurt would be triggered in any event and circumstance. If “someone” could help to unwrap the bandage, remove the most hurtful stuffs, sterilize the wound and comfort with care, **understanding and empathy**, then, **healing** occurs. Who’s the most effective “someone”? **The therapist together with the one who created the hurts.**



Challenge in Promoting TFM

- Code of Practice of Family Mediation.
- Bench mark of “Successful” in Mediation.
- Client's expectation.
- Professional expectation.

Reference

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